July 11, 2005

BORDER 2012 PROGRAM
NATIONAL COORDINATORS MEETING
March 8-10, 2005
Tucson, Arizona

Border Indicators Taskforce (BITF) Report

1. Background

According to the guiding principles of the Border 2012 program, progress should be measured through the development and use of environmental and public health-based indicators. As a result, the Border Indicators Task Force (BITF) was established at the National Coordinators Meeting in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, on December 2003.

The objective of the BITF is to build, administer, and disseminate a set of environmental and public health-based indicators that assess changes in the border region's conditions and measure progress toward meeting Program goals and objectives.

The role of the BITF is to collaborate with all Border 2012 coordinating bodies and partners in order to define a binational set of indicators, as well as assist with the development of protocols for the collection, analysis, and quality control of the data necessary for the calculation and interpretation of those indicators. The indicators developed and used should measure real and meaningful results, providing partners and decision-makers with an informative tool that can help shape public health and environmental policy priorities.

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2. Accomplishments for 2004-2005

o Strategy for the Development of Border 2012 Indicators: This strategy will guide the development of border indicators. It provides common terminology and describes a conceptual framework in order to facilitate the selection, interpretation, and organization of indicators.

o Preliminary Binational Set of Indicators: After an extensive literature review, a set of potential indicators was formulated for the Program. This preliminary set addresses the six Program goals and incorporates the actions implemented. The BITF distributed the proposed indicators set to the Program coordinating bodies and received their feedback.

o Web Sites: Two prototype websites were developed: SEMARNAT's Border 2012 Indicators website and a server to support BITF activities (Quick Place). The first site aims to disseminate the indicators and actions implemented for each Program objective and the

second facilitates internal exchange of relevant indicator information between BITF participants. Both sites are updated frequently.

3. 2005-06 Priorities

o   Strategy for the Development of Border 2012 Indicators: The *Strategy for the Development of Border 2012 Indicators* and the preliminary *Binational Set of Border 2012Indicators* require the review and approval by the Program co-chairs. Once consensus is reached on the indicators, steps will be taken to advance their development.

o   Data management strategy: A strategy will be developed to capitalize on current efforts and resources as well as aid in the harmonization of data processes, including data collection, management, and analysis. Overall, the strategy will guide the data flow for the development of indicators and propose near term and long term options for the management and sharing of indicator data and metadata in a robust, compatible, usable and accessible format. An interim product of this task may be the development of a directory of available data sources, which will aid in the systematic collection of data and identification of data gaps.

o   Communication mechanisms for the dissemination of indicator information: Different communication approaches will be assessed such as the utilization of EPA's and SEMARNAT's websites, the establishment of a virtual library, and the publication of the Binational Set of Border 2012 Indicators before the end of 2005. The BITF will work collaboratively with the Communications Task Force.

o   Review and administration of indicators: Review processes that allow for continuous evaluation of the indicator's performance will be explored. The objective is to facilitate the updating and maintenance of the indicators.